

T-PATCH

United States Division-South Weekly Newsletter



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Contingency Operating Base Basra, Iraq

May 16, 2011

Care Packages for Iraqis



Texas troops
demonstrate goodwill
for Iraqi citizens



American Soldiers and Defense Department civilians load boxes of donated clothing and toys at the Basrah International Business Center at Contingency Operating Base Basra. Soldiers and military families donated the items for Iraqi children and widows.

Photo by Sgt. Raymond Quintanilla

By Sgt. Raymond Quintanilla
305th MPAD, USD-S PAO

BASRAH, Iraq – Chap. (Lt. Col.) J. Craig Combs, 36th Infantry Division chaplain, and Farida Samano, the USD-S Women's Initiative Advisor, transferred approximately 40 boxes filled with items such as slippers, baby clothing, school supplies, and toys to the Chaldean Archdiocese of Southern Iraq, Bishop Imad Aziz Albanna at the Basrah International Business Center in Contingency Operating Base Basra, May 5.

The items were collected for the last six months through a joint effort of service members in theater and their families back home to help provide basic necessities to Iraqi orphans and unemployed.

"Iraq has the potential of being a wealthy nation, but it's a war-torn nation and there's a lot of poverty," said Combs. "They're still trying to rebuild their infrastructure, to rebuild their economy, and so there are a lot of people that go without normal every day goods and services."

"There's a tremendous need for not only goods and services, but of goodwill," he

continued. "We want to take care of people who have gone through tragedies and loss of loved ones."

"Our people in the States care about Iraqis," said Samano. "They feel for those in need. Despite our economy, they still manage to purchase these items for the Iraqi people and most importantly for the children."

"There's a lady from the States who donated more than a thousand slippers for adults and children, and she still wants to send more," Samano continued, "but we have storage issues right now. We don't have room to keep the items."

"It's very rewarding to see that we really are doing some good here and able to impact the people of Iraq in a positive way," said Combs, who did similar missions in Iraq in 2005, "and hopefully leave them with a good reflection of what the Americans are all about, and that is to help people that need help."

Staff Sgt. Francisco Estrada of the 350th Civil Affairs Command, attached to the 36th Inf. Div. and assisting with this humanitarian effort, explained the importance of the Army carrying out civic

actions.

"We always try to engage the local populace and we do several humanitarian aid events to show them that we are not here to take them over, we do not mean any ill-will towards them, and let them know we are their friends," said Estrada.

As plans for the American military exit from Iraq are slowly carried out, the importance of a positive relationship between the two countries play an important role.

"Our mission here is to leave Iraq in a better place," Combs said. "To hand our mission to the State Department and keep a good working relationship. Even though the U.S. military is leaving, we want to have a continuing partnership that goes forward, as two nations that work together."

"It took a lot of time and effort, almost six months in order to organize all of this," Samano said. "I am very grateful for all the people who donated and collected these goods. I am very appreciative that they (Americans) are thinking of the Iraqi people. This will help the Iraqi people and of course the relationship between the two countries." ▼

Soldiers serve as linguists, cultural interpreters

By Maj. William Mott

STT 1st Bn., 12th Cav. Regt., 3rd AAB, 1st Cav. Div.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE BASRA, Iraq –

Most of us are familiar with the local national interpreters, however there is a new generation of Soldiers born from Operation Iraqi Freedom, and developed into combat multipliers for Operation New Dawn; U.S. Soldier interpreters under the military occupational specialty O-9L, Linguist, here in Basrah, Iraq.

They are referred to as “oh-nine-lima,” Arabic speaking Americans who have joined the U.S. military to serve as linguists.

Spc. Ali Gamah, originally from Iraq, and Spc. Ehab Amer, from Egypt, are two examples of this new breed of Soldiers who are deployed with Stability Transition Teams (STT) within 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

“I came into my mission at the Basrah Operations Center (BaOC) with all the concerns and fears that I have as an American Soldier born and raised in Basrah,” said Gamah.

Initially, he thought translating his native language into English would be an easy job but quickly realized his tasks were more extensive. From coordinating convoys without violating operational security to coordinating with Iraqi Security Forces

(ISF) for missions with U.S. forces, his job is not easy.

The BaOC conducts 24-hour operations. The five-person team manages the BaOC convoys to accomplish the counter indirect fire patrols, humanitarian aid missions, Provincial Reconstruction Team movements, ISF convoys and training tasks.

Amer, who calls Alaska home, joined the STT by way of Fort Irwin, Calif. Gamah has been performing this pivotal job since February with him.

Amer said he is impressed with the level of responsibility he has in translating information for U.S. and Iraqi officers concerning military intelligence.

“Spc. Gamah and I have developed a high level of cooperation with the entire Iraqi staff, and they readily share concerns they get from the Iraqi ground forces,” said Amer.

He added that the rapport they have built allows them to expedite mission changes and urgent messages to quickly redirecting the Iraqi army or police escorts for U.S. convoys.

Two non-commissioned officers and Maj. Luis Cruz, the BaOC STT leader, round out the five-person team.

Cruz considers it a unique career opportunity to work with the linguists.

“They are both proud to be nation builders for the new Iraq.” said Cruz. ▼



Maj. Nelson Cruz, Spc. Ali and Staff Sgt. Claudio Barzan stand in front of an Iraqi Army vehicle during one of their advise and assist missions with the 14th Iraqi Army.

Photo by Maj. William Mott



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SHARKS IN THE SKY

229th Aviation assumes mission over Kalsu

Photo by Staff Sgt. Garrett Ralston



Sgt. Samuel G. Rodriguez, an AH-64D Apache maintenance chief with Company B, 1st Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, 21st Cavalry Brigade, originally from Arlington, Texas, conducts pre-flight checks before a mission over Contingency Operating Site Kalsu April 12, 2011. The 229th "Tigersharks" are conducting counter indirect-fire missions around Kalsu in support of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Garrett Ralston

By Staff Sgt. Garrett Ralston
3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment PAO

BABIL, Iraq – Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, 21st Cavalry Brigade, are now patrolling Contingency Operating Site Kalsu aiming to enhance its force protection.

Aviators of the 229th "Tigersharks," are employing their AH-64D Apache helicopters to watch over a wide area around the base, hunting for insurgents who aim to attack Kalsu, and provide security for convoys moving in the area.

"Our mission out here is to provide an additional asset for ground forces to counter indirect-fire attacks," said Capt. Zachary Yoklic, executive officer of Company B, and a native of Weirton, W.V. "We will also provide convoy security around Kalsu."

COS Kalsu has historically been a hotspot for insurgent attacks and the presence of combat aviation puts pressure on those who attempt to attack the base. While a Soldier presence on the ground provides a similar deterrent, having the helicopters in the air can offer much faster and wider coverage.

"We will basically go out and look at historic areas of interest to make sure there is no threat present or prevent that threat," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nathan T. Ratliff, an AH-64D pilot, originally from Orlando, Fla.

Beside the obvious dangers involved with their mission there is a tremendous logistical

requirement to keep the helicopters fit to fly each day. Because the unit is now separated from their main support, and with minimal qualified maintenance support on Kalsu, many hours are spent combing over the aircraft to ensure their readiness.

"We do what we can to maintain the aircraft since we are unable to conduct heavy maintenance here," said Spc. Jameel Sanders, an Apache maintenance chief, and native of San Antonio. "We have to make sure that everything is in order before the pilots take off. If something goes wrong, they can't just pull over on a cloud."

The Tigershark's mission supporting the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment is also unique in that many of its Soldiers were former members of the 3rd ACR. Sanders and Yoklic both served in the 4th squadron of the 3rd ACR which was reorganized as the 229th last year.

Sanders said when he found out about the mission to come support the 3rd ACR, he jumped at the chance to come back and serve alongside his old unit.

With all of the equipment and personnel in place, the Soldiers of Company B are in fluid motion, flying missions around the clock to increase the safety of those serving on Kalsu.

"The 3rd ACR has bent over backward to make sure that we have everything we need to successfully complete our missions every day," said Yoklic. "If every time we're up there the base does not get rocketed then that's the best part of my day." ▼

Checkmate

Greywolf lieutenant chosen to play
in All-Army Chess Championship

Story and photos by Spc. Sharla Lewis
3rd AAB, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq –

Chess is a game of strategy, preparation and control. When the players are unmatched, a game may end in as few as three moves, but when players of equal ability contend, a game may last hours with hundreds of moves.

Those serious about chess study and practice whenever they have a chance.

Take for example, 1st Lt. Shelby Johnson, the executive officer of B Company, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, who was recently accepted to play in the All-Army Chess Championship.

Johnson, a native on New Orleans, La., learned the game from his stepfather when he was ten years old. He said he realized his talent after beating his stepfather in game after game, then beating his stepfather's friends.

After that, there was no stopping him. He played on winning teams through junior high school and high school and played independently in college.

Now, he plays chess daily against anyone willing to challenge him, including Thomas Peels, who works camera surveillance for Lockheed Martin Corporation. Peels said the games they play are challenging and hard to predict.

"I've been playing for more than 20 years and he was someone I thought I would whoop on, but I haven't won a game yet," said Peels. "It's not like he beats me in six or seven moves, we play all the way to the end. I'll get so close and he'll still beat me! I can never tell what he's thinking by his emotion."

The correlations between playing chess and being an officer in the Army are close, and at times overlap. Johnson said he has looked up to other chess players that lead dual lives.

"Chess requires a lot of attention to detail, planning and patience," Johnson said. "I have followed International Grandmaster Maurice Ashley's career for several years. I've never met him in person, but I really admire that besides playing chess, he is a professional businessman."

Johnson said he hadn't considered applying to play in the championship until one of his Soldiers suggested it.

"They reviewed my application and saw that I am a rated member of the U.S. Chess Federation. Then they looked at my ratio of wins, losses and draws and my tournament history. I found out a few weeks ago, at the end of April."

Everyone that knows Johnson could see how proud he was to be accepted and to represent the battalion at the championship.

"The day before he was accepted was a crazy day for him and then he got the letter and was overwhelmed with relief," said Sgt. 1st Class Donyield Parks, the human resources noncommissioned officer in charge for the battalion and friend of Johnson. "Lt. Johnson is a quiet, reserved person. For him to represent the brigade in this way is great because it shows that you can achieve any goal you put your mind to."

The battalion's leaders feel the same. Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Wallace, the battalion's senior ranking noncommissioned officer, said the opportunity to participate in the championship will be the icing on the cake for the brigade.

"I just think it's awesome. I don't play chess, but to get selected for this championship is a dream of his and I'm happy for him," he said. "I wish him the best of luck." ♠

1st Lt. Shelby Johnson, the executive officer of B Company, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, plays chess with a friend at Contingency Operating Base Adder May 3, 2011. Johnson has been playing the game for 26 years and will participate in the All Army Chess Championships this month.

"We are the Soldiers of the 36th..."

1LT ERIKA COUTURIER

Deputy Chief-Air Missile Defense



Name: Couturier, Erika
Primary Military Specialty: Air Defense Artillery Officer
Secondary Military Specialty: None
Hometown: Bainbridge, GA
Grade: O-2

Couturier earned a degree in Political Science and received her commission through ROTC at Florida State University in 2004 and deployed to Kuwait and Qatar in 2007-09 with the 243rd Air Defense Artillery Battalion. She later left the active Army and joined the Texas National Guard in 2010.

She comes from a military family. Her father served in the Army and Marines, her mother served in the Navy, and her sister is currently a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. Halfway through her previous deployment, she was reassigned as the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, which she considers her most memorable Army experience.

SFC TIMOTHY ALLEN

Counter-Improvised Explosive
Device Operations NCO



Name: Allen, Timothy
Primary Military Specialty: Combat Engineer
Secondary Military Specialty: Bridge Crewman; Track Vehicle Crewman; Lance Crewmember
Hometown: Bishop, TX
Grade: E-7

Allen joined the Kentucky National Guard in 1988 and transitioned to the active Army from 1991 - 2001. Joined the Texas National Guard in 2003. Spent 18 of the past 20 years of service involved with combat engineering. Served two previous tours in Iraq. Close to completing his degree in Computer Science.

Allen feels that he had the greatest impact during his Baghdad tour in 2008-09 conducting route clearance. "We were saving lives trying to defeat IEDs. We weren't worried about our safety. We were making sure the roads were safe for everybody else."

SPC JEANNETTE GONZALEZ

Help Desk Administrator



Name: Gonzalez, Jeannette
Primary Military Specialty: Information Systems Operator
Secondary Military Specialty: None
Hometown: San Antonio, TX
Grade: E-4

Gonzalez enlisted in the National Guard in Dec. 2006 and quickly took advantage of the education benefits. Currently a year away from receiving her bachelors in Sociology and Psychology at the University of Texas, San Antonio. Plans to pursue her masters at the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio.

She considers her current and first deployment in Iraq as her most memorable Army experience. "Just interacting with so many people from so many different places, learning about different cultures; you become really close to the people you work with and you really develop long lasting friendships."

CHOW

Midnight • 0000 - 0130

Breakfast • 0530 - 0830

Lunch • 1130 - 1400

Dinner • 1700 - 2000

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Monday - Saturday

0600 - 2200

william.culver@iraq.centcom.mil

Rosary Prayer

Tuesday at 2000

COB Basra Chapel

arturo.rodriguez.jr@iraq.centcom.mil

Mid-Week Prayer with Chaplain Mays

Wednesday at 1200

COB Basra Chapel

wayne.mays@iraq.centcom.mil

Basra Chapel Bible Studies Thursday

1900 - New Believers Bible Study

2000 - Bible Study Classes

Protestant Services

Sunday

COB Basra Chapel

1000 - Contemporary Service

1130 - Traditional Service

1400 - Gospel Service

1700 - Liturgical Protestant

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS)

Sunday

Old PX Building

0900 - Sacrament Service

Roman Catholic

Saturday

COB Basra Chapel

2000 - Rosary/Vigil Service

Sunday

COB Basra Chapel

0800 - Catholic Service

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Paralegal Specialist

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Mail handlers:

1000 - 2000

1400 - 1600

Individual pick up:

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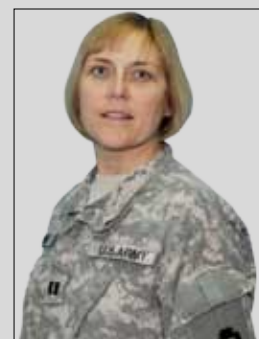
Capt.

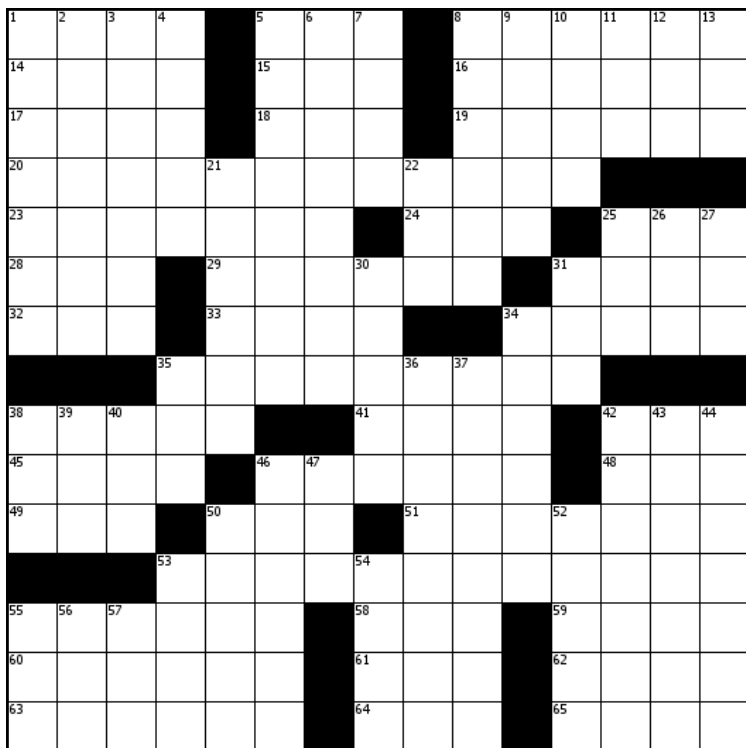
Lisa Ann Lerma

COB Basra
Resiliency Campus
858-4672

lisa.lerma@iraq.centcom.mil

Anonymous Tip Hotline on NIPR
<https://msc.forces.iraq.centcom.mil/usds/default.aspx>





Across

1. Jane Austen heroine
5. Subway Series player
8. IHOP offering
14. Extinct birds of New Zealand
15. One of Frank's exes
16. Domiciles
17. Shipboard bed
18. Piece of Walt Disney art
19. Practice site for "The Partridge Family"
20. Mel Brooks' spouse
23. "Maggie May" singer Rod
24. It does a bang-up job?
25. Fizzled firecracker
28. "To --- With Love" (1967)
29. Monopoly purchases
31. Words of approximation
32. "Owner of a Lonely Heart" group
33. Med. school subj.
34. In regard to
35. Big name in etiquette
38. Pancho ---, Mexican revolutionary
41. The Four --- (50s vocal group)
42. Business equip. co.
45. Twistable cookie
46. Coiffure
48. "Cakes and ---" (Maugham novel)
49. Like Madame Tussaud's figures
50. "Kindergarten ---" (Schwarzenegger film)
51. Make filthy
53. "Diff'rent Strokes" actress
55. Dancer's colleague
58. Singer/songwriter DiFranco
59. PBS science program
60. Virgil's hero
61. Society page word
62. The fourth person
63. Author with a first name in 20-A, 35-A or 53-A
64. Kildare and Quinn, e.g.
65. "Gorillas in the ---"

Down

1. Diplomat's building
2. Dudley Do-Right was one
3. Miss --- (modern-day 35-A)
4. Twisted to one side
5. What Yankee Doodle called the feather
6. Expected to follow in the future
7. Afterbath powder
8. "--- East" (John Candy film)
9. Rearward, at sea
10. Setting for "F Troop"
11. Pharmaceuticals watchdog agency
12. Long John Silver had one
13. Linguistic suffix
21. Grand --- Island
22. AAA info.
25. Dr. --- of rap
26. JFK's service branch
27. Big --- ("The Cider House Rules" character)
30. Phonograph needles
31. Toronto prov.
34. Arrange by categories
35. "Don't Bring Me Down" grp.
36. Governor, at times
37. Curiosities
38. Promise
39. Gershwin or Levin
40. Superman's foe, --- Luthor
42. Kenya capital
43. Splits
44. Passed out the cards again
46. Like the voice of Brando's Godfather
47. Spring mo.
50. Ignore the rules
52. Coffee break time, perhaps
53. Joan of "Twin Peaks"
54. "The --- Before Time" (1988)
55. Light touch
56. --- Lingus
57. Cone or Cat intro

Sudoku

6	4	2						5
		1	8	2				3
				4			7	
			2	9				
9								7
	3	7	5	6			8	
	5			7			4	9
		8		1				6
4	1	9						



UNITED STATES DIVISION-SOUTH INSPECTOR GENERAL

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usds-ig@iraq.centcom.mil



Photo of the Week



Photo by 1st Lt. Adriana Ramos

Spc. Celina Partida, Charlie Medical Company, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, cleans the windows of her assigned Mine Resistant Armor Protected vehicle during maintenance at motorpool 3 on Contingency Operating Base Adder.

Think your photos are good enough for the Photo of the Week? Send them in! Just e-mail us your photo in a high-quality format, along with your full name and rank and a description of what your photo is about and when it was taken. Remember to include full name, rank and job title of each person in your photo. We look forward to seeing what you can do.

Send your photos to:
36idpao@gmail.com

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